

## **Do You Know My Jesus? Studies in the Gospel of John**

### **By Bob Young**

#### **Introduction/review**

If you know the Jesus of Mark, what do you know? What is the focus of Mark? Jesus leads us in suffering; he leads us in glory. When you know this Jesus, you will know suffering and glory. You will come to know the Son of Man (suffering) who was in fact the Son of God (glory). You know that the glory came because of the suffering. You know that life is ultimately focused on the glory which Christ brings into our lives. The essence of life is “glory.”

Today we ask the same question of John’s gospel. John is not one of the synoptic gospels—so we rightfully expect different answer. How does John describe Jesus?

Writer of Hebrews: “someone somewhere solemnly said....” (Heb. 2:6). Here is an impressive statement, I do not know the original source, the statement appears in G. R. Beasley-Murray’s little book on John: “the term salvation is not in the vocabulary of Jesus.” I will hold back a moment before I tell you what word Jesus uses instead. When we reflect upon the frequency with which we use the word salvation today, it is remarkable if in fact Jesus almost never uses it. Yes, it is found—Jesus used it in John 4:22, salvation is of the Jews. Luke records it in the Zacchaeus encounter, today salvation has come to your house. But that’s it.

Salvation is a Jewish word more than a Christian word, at least from what we can see in the Gospels.

Take this detour with me (OT/Psalms/Isaiah): 64/34/18, 30/18/5.

NT: 43; 6 in gospels (Luke has 4 additional uses in the birth narratives). Acts has 5 occurrences in sermons/references to the Jews. Hebrews has 6; Revelation has 3. 12 NT books have no reference, 7 more have 1-2 with the two mostly in one sentence (repeated word). That is 19 of the NT books that do not mention it or barely mention it.

What word then did Jesus use to convey the concept? Last week I suggested a possibility from Mark—glory. That would also be a good possibility from John, but it is not the most obvious answer. Our anonymous source says the word is “LIFE.” Jesus leads us in LIFE.

Now it would be possible to contest that answer—there are other good possibilities—what about the expression “kingdom of God.” But most know today that kingdom of God is not area, nor people, but the simple putting forth of the power of God as sovereign—sometimes we read reign of God, other times sovereignty of God, as he acts to fulfill his promise to bring restoration or re-creation to his people.

The result of people opening their lives to God’s power (even his saving power) is life, new life. This is reflected in the purpose statement of John: 20:31.

While the authors of the first three gospels use the word less frequently than John, they understood well the word. Mark 9:43; 10:17-31. Synonyms in the narrative: inherit eternal life, treasure in heaven, enter the kingdom of God, be saved, eternal life in the age to come.

Major difference between life in John’s gospel and in the OT is that generally it is a future hope, but in John it is the gift of God given in the present time, as in John 5:24. Why does this occur? Students of John’s gospel answer that it is due to John’s understanding of the significance of Jesus—that is our question, do you know this Jesus?

**First, Jesus is the cosmic Lord! (1:1-4)**

Word, revelation, what makes sense, logic

**Second, Jesus is the incarnate Lord**, the incarnation of God, becoming flesh, embodiment (1:14ff)

Grace/truth

Light/life

5:26

There is throughout John a tension between Jesus' identity and the signs (7 in number) that confirm his identity. He is the Lamb, light, life, bread, resurrection, way, truth, life, vine. But ultimately the Risen Lord.

**Third, Jesus is the Lord of conflict**, our cosmic leader in the battle of conflicting worlds, focusing the genuine nature of life, a life that continues through his presence through the Comforter.

**Jesus is the Lord of comfort**

**Jesus is the coming Lord**

Ultimately, the story is one of descent and ascent, coming down and lifting up. The ultimate goal of life is glory.